



# City of Hampton, VA

## Meeting Minutes

### City Council

22 Lincoln Street  
Hampton, VA 23669  
[www.hampton.gov](http://www.hampton.gov)

*Linda Curtis*  
*W. H. "Billy" Hobbs, Jr.*  
*Will Moffett*  
*Chris Snead*  
*Christopher G. Stuart*  
*Donnie R. Tuck*  
*George E. Wallace, Mayor*

*Staff:*  
*Mary Bunting, City Manager*  
*Vanessa T. Valldejuli, City Attorney*  
*Katherine K. Glass, CMC, Clerk of Council*

---

Wednesday, April 23, 2014

5:31 PM

Council Chambers, 8th Floor, City Hall

---

#### **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

#### **GEORGE E. WALLACE PRESIDED**

**PRESENT:** Linda Curtis, W. H. "Billy" Hobbs, Jr., Will Moffett, Chris Snead, Christopher G. Stuart

**ABSENT:** Donnie R. Tuck

Councilman Tuck was not present at the time of roll call; however, arrived shortly thereafter at 5:33 p.m.

The invocation and Pledge of Allegiance were given at the 7 p.m. session.

#### **CEREMONIAL ITEMS - "Spotlight on Citizens" - Hampton Housing Blitz**

Mayor Wallace welcomed everyone to the meeting, noted that the program's focus is on the Hampton Housing Blitz Program and then called upon Social Media Coordinator Brian Marchese to emcee the program.

Social Media Coordinator Brian Marchese greeted those on the dais and welcomed everyone to the Spotlight on Citizens Program, an opportunity for City Council to recognize the achievements of Hampton's residents and businesses that are making Hampton a better community. He stated that the Hampton Home Repair Blitz is a program in which the City of Hampton, Habitat for Humanity, Hampton Redevelopment & Housing Authority, along with many volunteers and corporate sponsors help elderly, disabled and low income homeowners make repairs to the outside of their homes. He noted that these projects range from yard work and debris removal, to painting and much more.

Mr. Marchese introduced Housing and Neighborhood Services Division Manager Jonathan McBride, who shared that we recognized a need in the community for these maintenance projects; therefore, the City's Neighborhood Office built partnerships with various organizations in the community to make the Hampton Housing Repair Blitz

Program a reality. He also shared that the first Home Repair Blitz took place on May 18, 2002, and two such events have been held each year since that time. Over 82 homes have been impacted in four neighborhoods (Old North Hampton, Rosalee Gardens, Tyler Seldendale and North Phoebus). He added that over 800 volunteers participated in the 4 events and brought \$150,000 worth of volunteer labor in 4 days and over \$38,000 in community support donations.

Mr. McBride noted there have been numerous partnerships including ones with Home Depot, Lowes, and Morris Lawn Maintenance and other key community partners such as schools and the faith based community. He thanked all of the partners for their help with these projects.

Additional team leaders and volunteers who commented on the Hampton Home Repair Blitz Program included Latoya Tyler of Habitat for Humanity Peninsula Greater Williamsburg; Bryce Johnson, Principal of Bassette Elementary School; Craig Meadows of Lifepoint Christian Church; Ty and Bill Wharton of Wharton Construction; and Keenan Williams of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity.

A picture slide was shown displaying pictures of some of the teams and projects on which they worked.

Mayor Wallace commented that this is another example of how Hampton is a great City and it shows the Hampton spirit. He thanked all of the volunteers, partners and participants for coming together and working hard to make our community the best it can be.

The participants who were in attendance were photographed with Mayor Wallace and some of the members of Council.

Following the presentation on Hampton's Housing Blitz, Mayor Wallace recognized scouts from Boy Scout Troop 99 of St. Mark's Church. The Boy Scouts were visiting the City Council meeting in connection with their work on their communications merit badge. Mayor Wallace noted that these scouts had been presented with City of Hampton lapel pins earlier in the day.

Scout Troop 99's Scout Master greeted those on the dais and thanked them for the opportunity to allow the scouts to observe the meeting and help them work towards obtaining their communications badge.

Scout Troop 99 was also photographed with Mayor Wallace and the members of Council.

The Public Comment Period convened at 6:08 p.m. following a ten minute recess.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mayor Wallace asked those in the audience who may be present to speak about the budget to give their comments during the Budget Public Hearing Special meeting which will be held at 7:00 p.m. Clerk of Council Katherine Glass read the protocol for the Public Comment Period.



Ms. Kelleen Townsend, 216 Skipper Court, representing Hampton BMX greeted those on the dais and made the following statement: Thank you very, very much for your support and your attention to our wishes and our vision for Hampton BMX. I would like to update you on what we have done since we last met and also to express our appreciation to those on Council who attended our year end awards banquet. You will remember that we displayed a diagram and some different photos of possible BMX relocation sites. After that meeting, we polled our membership through social media (text messaging and so forth), to reach out to the masses. We expanded our outreach outside of our wonderful seven cities and the City of Hampton because we service many other people from around the country. We said before we jump on board, we want to know what our membership thinks. We gave (them) a few scenarios that included Briarfield as a relocation; Boo Williams, Armistead, to remain in Gosnolds (Hope Park), potentially move to a different part of Gosnolds or remain where we are and redesign and redevelop. After approximately six weeks, the overwhelmingly response was that no one could believe that we would want to leave. This is throughout the country. I had people that don't even ride anymore that said – you can't leave Hampton BMX; it's Hampton's super track; it's been there forever. I am here tonight to ask for your continued support. We've communicated with Mr. Wilson with Parks and Recreation who we can't thank enough for his continued support. The Conventions and Visitors Bureau as well are completely behind us and are presenting a Request for Proposal (RFP) to USA BMX to bring a National race for 2015 and we need your support to redesign and re-facilitate our current location. Visibility is a main thing. Vice Mayor Curtis, you and I spoke about this. Signage: If you put it out there, we have the tools from USA BMX to market this track as we have. We are growing every day. We just signed up five new riders last night. So, we can stay where we are and prosper. We need a more professional facility to draw on the big revenue races and I would appreciate any support and guidance in that. Thank you very much for hearing me. Have a great evening.

Mayor Wallace thanked Ms. Townsend for the feedback.

Mr. Edwin Boone, 48 Snow Street, signed up to speak; however, declined to speak when his name was called.

Mr. Joe King, 9811 Shell Road, greeted those on the dais and made the following statement: I am here to let you know that The Garden City Cultural and Historical Society is doing well. We have about 50 members and many of them are really busy. They are writers; people who do things and have deadlines. What we have done in Garden City is try to improve it to make it a better place to live for everyone. We want to do that by involving young people and families in things that are for real. For example, our main thing is going to be gardening in Garden City. I have been gardening for well over 60 years. We want to see this happen for us. We want to do what needs to be done in this community. This community is in decline. This community needs help. We are going to be there to oversee it. I spent 26 years in the military as a commander. I know a little bit about leadership. I think we can help. I have invested a lot in the community. I want everybody to know that we are serious and we are going to do something. I'm going to be like a paid community person, but I am paying myself. We want to do what we need to do to make this a better community. Harvey (next speaker) is going to talk about it. We are talking about gardening; we are talking about teaching kids; we are talking about a quiet space where people can come. It will be very nice. It



will be over an acre. We are buying what is around us. We want to show people that we can have a nice community and it's just going to take time to do it.

Mr. Harvey London, 911 Shell Road, greeted those on the dais and made the following statement: I'm a 70 year resident of Hampton. I went to Phenix High School. The community that I lived in that we moved to was a new community back in the '50's which is Suburban Parkway which is right off of Greenbriar Avenue, which is another gardening community. Garden City, Dunbar Gardens, Greenbriar, and Aberdeen Gardens – all of these garden city areas perpetuated a certain life style for our community which was a prosperous boon for the people growing there, myself included. When I came back from the service and I had been away, I got to working with Mr. Joe King and he has a grand idea of re-establishing the values and the traditions of gardening in the Garden City area. I met some of you gentlemen there. The Mayor was there. Mr. Tuck was there. Some more of the City people were there when we kicked off last year. In a year's time, I have actually learned how to grow eggplant, tomatoes, and okra. I have lost 45 pounds as far as being able to eat out of my garden (vegetables) versus eating a lot of processed foods. To me, it is a very good thing that the Garden City Society is presenting to the Hampton community. By health, it helps us, but also it beautifies the community. If I go past my mother's house on Suburban Parkway right now, her azaleas are coming in bloom. She has an azalea surrounding a tree. She has azaleas out front; they are coming in bloom. This goes back to how Garden City and the Greenbrier areas used to look. My mother is 91 years old, so you can imagine how old the plants are. That is the idea that Joe is trying to re-introduce into the community. It helps, not only us retiring citizens, but the young people also get a chance to see and be in a growing, thriving community where they can generally learn how to feed themselves with the gardening program, the kitchen gardening concept in particular, but also, they can learn how to work with their hands to be able to be a part of a community that looks well, is well presented and is also an asset to our Hampton community. I think Hampton used to be a number one community in the area and in the nation. It got an award for being a number one City. I would like to see that happen again with these kinds of projects.

Mayor Wallace noted that Council has adopted community garden concepts and an ordinance to facilitate that process. He said Parks and Recreation Director James Wilson and City Manager Mary Bunting are available to work with this group to develop the concept and help it become the best it can be.

Mr. King recognized two audience members visiting from Newport News, Ms. Jerry Spruce and her daughter, who have participated in this project. He added that this is the dream he has for Hampton and America, but we need help from those in the community. Mayor Wallace reiterated that Council has adopted this, are their partners, has embraced the concept and encouraged staff to do everything possible to facilitate and help in this effort. Mayor Wallace opened the floor for additional comments from those on the dais. There were no additional comments.

Mayor Wallace called for additional speakers from those in the audience. There was one additional speaker.

Ms. Joan Charles, 101 Madrid Drive, greeted those on the dais and made the following statement: Hampton's All American City Award entry with the National Civic League. Is it a sham or is it a shame? In promoting the I-Value concept for budget items, was it mentioned that the survey questions and choice of answers given to small groups were

controlled by City Hall? From push button presentations to putting fake money in fish bowls, alleged citizen engagement was touted. Does the League know true public opinion was reduced from five to three minutes at Council meetings? Or that Hampton is the only City of its size in Virginia that has reduced full meetings to once a month? Do they know that voter turnout in Hampton is a pathetic 18 to 20%? Is citizen engagement in Hampton a shame or is it a sham or is it both? Hampton boasted a reduction in the school dropout rate to 3.8%. According to the Virginia Department of Education, 14.5% did not graduate on time. In three years, passing scores for reading dropped from 90 to 82%; writing scores dropped from 90 to 74%; math from 91 to 71%. Was the quality of our graduates mentioned? Is this a shame or a sham or is it both? We have the highest tax rate on the peninsula. We have a continuing loss of population. (In) 2010, we lost 6% while York County gained 16%. Median household income in York is \$84,000 compared to Hampton's \$47,000. Are the affluent seeking the best schools for their children? This year the League is highlighting health. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation ranks locations in the United States with data gathered. It is not a contest. No entry form. It is pure unbiased data. Out of 133 Virginia locations, Hampton ranked 102nd for health behavior; ranked 80th for social and economic factors. On the Peninsula, we were the worst for alcohol and drug abuse, adult obesity, and for single parent homes. Does this sound like an All American City? All American City: is it just a piece of paper? Is Hampton a sham? Would the National Civic League want to consider these numbers?

Ms. Charles noted that she has research documents; and, therefore, Council does not have to double check behind her. She continued with her statement: The sad thing is Hampton could be an All American City.

Mayor Wallace thanked Ms. Charles for her comments and stated we respect her opinion as she is entitled to it.

Mayor Wallace called for additional speakers from those in the audience. There were no additional speakers. He then requested that Ms. Bunting report back to Council at the next meeting with information regarding where Hampton ranks with our school success, our livability and how people view Hampton regarding being a community in which to live. He expressed the importance of having comparison and contrast and standing by our figures and being able to defend them.

## ADJOURNMENT

---

George E. Wallace  
Mayor

---

Katherine K. Glass, CMC  
Clerk of Council

Date approved by Council \_\_\_\_\_

